

# **The American Teacher**

*Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy*

**OFFICIAL ORGAN, THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS**

VOL. V No. 9

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50 CENTS A YEAR

## **LOST!**

Between College and Disillusionment--  
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An Effective Initiative

Between Suspicion and Supervision--  
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Everywhere

# TEACHERS AND LABOR UNIONS

HENRY R. LINVILLE

IN THE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS for April, 1916, there was re-published the *Appeal to Form a Teachers' Union* issued by the Teachers' League of New York with "an opposing argument" written by Mr Van Evrie Kilpatrick, Principal of P. S. 26, Manhattan, New York City. The title of the opposing argument was "Teachers and Labor Unions." Mr Kilpatrick's article has the cardinal virtue of brevity and is written in a spirit of fairness. It is not correct, however, in its interpretation of the teachers' union movement.

Mr Kilpatrick suggests that the teachers of New York are already provided with abundant facilities for becoming members of large organizations, and that "the National Education Association is undoubtedly the most potential and broadly professional teachers' league in the world." The old-line local organizations of teachers in New York may be joined and are joined by thousands of teachers, but no one will seriously maintain that any of them have the least effect upon the problem of improving the conditions under which teaching is done. Some of the organizations have indeed succeeded in obtaining salary increments for the special class or a portion of the special class included in their membership. Their activities begin and end with salaries or pensions.

No one will question the statement that the National Educational Association is "the most potential and broadly professional teachers' league in the world." Relatively the statement is imposing; absolutely, there is very little power and not a great deal of professionalism coming out of the N E A.

The fact is that neither the typical local organization of teachers nor the National Educational Association is moved by the spirit that leads to fundamental changes in educational ideals and practise. Both are satisfied "to progress slowly," which means to accept with

passivity the major part of what is done to-day, and to wait for changes as they come. Besides, let anyone try to move the National Educational Association with an appeal to resent infringement of professional rights, and he will soon learn that the "potential" feature of the N E A is heavily on the side of leaving matters as they are. If the managers of the N E A had desired ever to show the rank and file of the teachers that they are "the most broadly professional teachers' league in the world," and actually professional in a vital sense, they could have done so with magnificent effectiveness when they learned of the unjust dismissal of thirty-eight union teachers in Chicago last June. But let anyone read the N E A resolutions of the session of 1916 and state positively that they were meant to apply to the Chicago situation. Yet those resolutions do contain the most definite reaction that it was possible to get from that "potential" organization on the flagrantly unjust dismissal of teachers by the unscrupulous Board of Education in Chicago. Our civilization has produced thousands of organizations within and without education that are tied hand and foot with traditions, with financial obligations, with social connections, and worse than all, bound body and soul to the ideals of *Things as They Are*. That fact had more to do than Mr Kilpatrick knows with the establishment of teachers' unions.

Mr Kilpatrick points out three fundamental objections to teachers joining labor unions. (1) "The teachers' social and occupational relations are entirely different from the mass of workers belonging to labor unions. The teacher is employed by the state; the union laborer by a private individual." (2) "The product of the teacher's labor is found in a better citizenship; the product of the labor unionist is always measured in dollars and cents. The teacher is mak-

ing men and women; the labor unionist is creating dollars." (3) "Many traditions and practices of labor unions are in direct antagonism to those of the teaching profession."

(1) Many unionists have had occasion to analyze the ownership of that impersonal thing called the state, and they have not been surprised to learn that Louis XIV was not the last of the tyrants to believe, even if they did not exclaim, that the state could be held in possession by a gang or by a special interest. If Lincoln Steffens had not demonstrated the identity of the ownership of the cities, and by mere extension, of the states as well, to lie in the unscrupulous commercial interests, we may find out any day that the typical statesman-politician regards himself responsible to those men in his constituency who have the most financial power. Teachers are just as surely the employees of the interests in power as are the men who slave in the factories. Let the teachers ask for better living conditions that may involve the expenditure of money, and the reaction of the masters is the same as if teachers were their private stenographers. The infamous Loeb of Chicago brazenly maintains that it is the right of the business men to control the educational affairs of the city. Does that not mean that the same interests should control the teachers themselves? Then what do we gain by being employees of the state?

(2) We wish we could believe that the product of the teacher's labor is found in a better citizenship. It ought to be true, but it cannot be true so long as teachers themselves are not citizens in the best and fullest sense of the term. The union movement designs to make them citizens in spirit and in power, and there is no other movement among teachers that does propose to do that for teachers. It is short-sighted to say that the teacher is creating men and women, and in the same breath to maintain that these men and women (who for the most part are the children of workingmen) are creating dollars. What is the use of

wasting our precious efforts if our product is to measure its labor in dollars and cents? After all, was it really intended that the workers should be credited with the production of dollars, that is, wealth? And would it not be fairer all around to say that the teachers as well as other workers ideally are rendering service, social service, for which they all receive pay, some more than others, and some not nearly enough?

(3) Mr Kilpatrick complains that the labor unions exercise tyrannical control over labor by refusing to approve the employment of men who are not licensed by the unions themselves. He says, "No employer, no matter how well he may be satisfied with the qualifications of the worker, dares to employ him, or to test him, without the consent of the labor union." He continues, "If this method were applied to the teaching profession in New York City, the teachers would hereafter be called upon to license themselves for the work of teaching for the city."

Without in the least intending it, Mr Kilpatrick has put his finger right on one of the most important of the jobs the teachers' unions have laid out for themselves. They do intend to license themselves to teach if they can bring that system about. That is to say, they intend to create their own standards instead of continually submitting to artificial standards concerning the creation of which they have had nothing to say. When teachers have created their own standards they will naturally say how these standards must be met by their fellows. They will license teachers to teach. Nothing less than that is now being done by physicians and by lawyers, and by preachers. Does the public resent it?

When the fair-minded, tho uninformed, critics of the union movement among teachers learn what social ideals there are beneath and back of the movement, there should develop a keener appreciation of the ways in which the best of their own generous ideals may actually be realized. The union movement is an important part of a great social move-

ment, and surprizing as it may seem to its support many of the best minds in the critics, the movement is drawing to the profession thruout the land.

## THE PENSION PROBLEM

PAUL STUDENSKY

Bureau of Municipal Research, New York City

### II. THE WHOLLY CONTRIBUTORY SYSTEM\*

A WHOLLY contributory system, as stated in the previous article, is a retirement system supported entirely by contributions of the employees.

Conservative taxpayers frequently favor the wholly contributory system. "This is the only retirement system for government employees which would cost us nothing," they say, "it is therefore the only system to which we do not object."

Many employees prefer the wholly contributory system, first, because it assures them a greater control over their fund and their benefits and, secondly, because its establishment easily gains acquiescence of the government.

The opposition to the establishment of a wholly contributory system, on the other hand, argues that it would be unfair to charge upon the employees the entire cost of a retirement system which will result in large savings for the government thru the elimination of the superannuated and disabled employee, the attraction of new and better forces to the service and generally thru improvements of the efficiency and morale of its personnel. It further argues that should the government actually establish such an unfair system and put upon the

\*In the previous article it was stated that retirement systems can be classified according to source of financial support (government or employee) into three types—wholly contributory (supported entirely by the employees themselves); non-contributory (entirely at the expense of the government) and partly contributory (supported jointly by the employees and the government).

employees the entire burden of its cost, the employees would justly try to shift part of this burden upon the government. They would demand higher wages on account of the heavy deductions, the government would eventually accede to their demand and the taxpayer who at the outset had the illusion that the establishment of the system would cost him nothing would eventually have to pay his part of the cost of the retirement system in the form of higher wages. The object of the government in putting the burden entirely upon the employees would therefore be defeated and a great deal of friction caused.

In answer to those who prefer a wholly contributory system because it assures the employees greater control over their fund and easily gains acquiescence of the government, its opponents bring forth the fact that the employees still retain considerable control over their fund even when the government subsidizes it and that the easy acquiescence of the government is not a sign that the system is fair and sound. It would be far better for the employees desiring the establishment of a system to proceed carefully, to impress the government with the importance of planning the system thoroly and of engaging an actuary for the determination of the cost of benefits, and to persuade the government of the advantages derived from subsidizing a sound retirement system than for them to introduce an immature and unsound system only because the government might easily accede to its establishment.

Before discussing any argument referring to the cost of benefits in a retirement fund, irrespective of the fact whether it is wholly or partly contributory, it must be first understood that a fund will be safe only when it is established on an actuarial reserve basis and provided with an adequate income. All insurance companies are compelled by law to operate on an actuarial reserve basis in order to protect the policy-holders from financial loss. But no laws that would compel all retirement funds to operate on an actuarial reserve basis have been enacted in this country as yet. Frequently, therefore, retirement funds are being established without an actuarial reserve and are provided with inadequate income. The younger employees are made to pay for the benefits of the older; and after a few years of operation these funds are depleted with the result that when the younger generation of employees approaches old age and claims the benefits there is no longer any money in the fund to pay them.

The strongest argument advanced against a wholly contributory system is that the cost of benefits is too great for the employees alone to bear. This argument is applied with different force to the following two different classes of employees: those who are in the service at the time of establishment of the system and who are called "present employees" in pension terminology and those who enter the service after the establishment of the system and who are called "future (or new) entrants."

This argument of excessive cost is most forceful in the case of present employees. Figures are brought forth showing that if the fund be established, as it should be, on an actuarial basis and should each class of employees of the same age be made to pay according to its proper age rate so that the younger employees should not pay for the benefits of the older, then the contributions required of the older present employees would be excessive. Even in the case of younger employees, the contributions would probably exceed 10 per cent. of

their salaries, whereas, in the case of older employees, the contributions required would not only reach in many instances 25 or 50 per cent. but in the case of the very old would actually exceed the annual salary. The impracticability of the wholly contributory system, as applied to the present force is, therefore, self-evident. Those wholly contributory funds that are now in operation could not have been established for the employees who were then in the service had the real cost of retirement benefits been actuarially ascertained. As these funds have not been established on an actuarial basis and have not been provided with adequate incomes, they are developing huge deficiencies and the young members are paying for the retirement of the older with no certainty that they themselves will reap any benefit when old age overtakes them. Sooner or later such funds will run on the rocks. Some of them will be abolished as many others have been; others will be assisted with a subsidy and will change from wholly contributory to partly or non-contributory.

When the argument that the cost of retirement benefits is too great for the employees alone to bear is applied to the future (or new) entrants it is far less forceful. For this class it would be entirely possible to establish a wholly contributory system on an actuarial basis.

The objection would, however, be raised that the contributions of employees who are of more advanced age at the time of entering the service would still be heavy, altho not as excessive as in case of present employees of the same age. The further objection of injustice would be raised if a wholly contributory system were established for new entrants only while another type of system was established for present employees. The new entrants would be made to pay the entire cost of their benefits without any assistance on the part of the government, whereas, the older force of employees would receive their benefits entirely or at least partly at the expense of the government. The final objection would be



that it would result in a demand for higher wages for employees entering the service on account of the heavy deductions from their wages.

To eliminate these objectionable features the advocates of wholly contributory systems propose to combine with it an elaborate device for increasing the wages of the new entrants so that after the deductions for retirement benefits were made the remaining part of the wages intended for the employees' immediate enjoyment might still be attractive and adequate. Such device, however, has never been tried either in this country or abroad. Because of lack of precedents, it can hardly be determined

whether or not this device would be practicable and whether the wholly contributory system combined with such a device and applied only to new entrants would on that account be made any more practicable.

On the other hand, the experience in this country and abroad of wholly contributory systems applied to those employees who are in the service at the time of their establishment is considerable. This experience tends to show that wholly contributory systems are impracticable and that they change to non or partly contributory.

The non-contributory system will be discussed in the next article.

### JUNE 27th AND TEACHERS EFFICIENCY

The striking out of the "Meritorious Service Clause" from the rules of the Board makes all teachers subject to failure of re-election every June. This amounts to the possibility of virtual dismissal without preferment of charges of any kind. What is the result upon the general body of teachers? The development of a state of unrest, insecurity, suspicion. There can be no other result. A feeling of security may be felt by some teachers who are confident of being in favor with their principal, or district superintendent, prominent politician or Board member. But such a sense of security rests on a bed of sand. Teachers have been discharged whose markings were superior. In time, therefore, this feeling of insecurity must penetrate the consciousness of everyone. No teacher can do good daily work in such a state. Her work is still further injured by her knowledge that no quality of service can make her position secure. She must depend on "pull" to stay in the system. This she must seek constantly, as counter influences may at any moment destroy what she has previously gained. The whole situation offers a splendid opportunity for making a political machine out of the teaching force. It gives a rather interesting sidelight to recollect

that this condition of uncertain tenure has come about since Illinois women gained partial suffrage.

The inefficiency of the present method is further revealed by reflecting on this quotation from the Board's attorneys.

The salary in each instance is attached to the position, *regardless of the individual who occupies it*. The amount of the salary in each instance *depends solely upon the years of service of the occupant*. A stated sum is fixed for the first year of service. For each additional year of service, for eleven years, an increased salary is fixed. The Cost to the Taxpayers *Decreases as Teachers, Old in the Service, Are Separated Therefrom and Their Places Are Filled by Teachers, New in the Service*. The whole salary scheme is entirely impersonal.

We see that experience and intimacy with local conditions are to be sacrificed for cheapness. The value of a teacher depends more on the ripeness of her judgment than on her age. This judgment is matured slowly through years of handling hundreds of diverse personalities. But all this is to be sacrificed because a teacher is nearing the maximum.

Now, no one is more interested in the elimination of poor teachers than are

good ones. They know how their own duties increase in difficulty with the presence of those who can not shoulder their own responsibilities. Then good teachers feel a pride in their profession which impels them to look with disfavor on those teachers who can not meet its high demands.

Hence it is undoubtedly true that if the present methods tended to improve efficiency or to dismiss inefficiency, the good teachers on the force would have welcomed and supported them. Alas, that this is not the condition, and that merit no longer necessarily secures position and that "pull" may.—*October Bulletin, Chicago Federation of Men Teachers and of The Federation of Women High School Teachers.*

### BOSTON SCHOOL COUNCILS

BENJAMIN GLASSBERG

THE DEMAND on the part of teachers in New York City and elsewhere for the participation of teachers in the administration of the schools has always been regarded by school officials and many teachers as utopian in character even when it was considered desirable. Most often it was considered far from desirable. A half-hearted beginning was made in New York City when a Teachers Council was created by ex-President Churchill. Care was taken to make the method of selection as undemocratic as possible, and the teaching body naturally has long since lost interest in its existence.

A step in the right direction has been made by Boston, judging from the last annual report of the Superintendent of Schools, Franklin B. Dyer.

There are eight high school councils in Boston, representing each high school in the main subjects. "They held monthly meetings," says the Superintendent in his report, "in which, not only courses of study and text-books were discussed, but also educational procedure and contributions to the teaching of the subjects. Four councils have been formed in the past year upon the transi-

tion from elementary to high school. These councils are composed of both high school teachers and teachers of upper elementary grades, to develop courses that will be harmonious thru the seventh and eighth grades and the first year of high school."

During the late Teachers Institutes in New York City the question of transition from the elementary to high school grades was the subject of discussion in some of the schools. At the gathering of the teachers of the Brooklyn High Schools one of the principals casually mentioned that there was such a problem, but confessed that he had nothing to say that would help toward its solution.

"In addition to the councils mentioned, there have also been formed an elementary-text-book council, a council upon physical training in the elementary schools, and a large committee on primary educational materials. There are forty committees, comprising about four hundred teachers, at work upon the elementary course of study. These councils and committees have been active and productive in the past year and their work is more and more forming the basis of our educational progress. They have demonstrated their usefulness and it is time to consider whether they should not be officially recognized, as are advisory committees of citizens on various school activities. This would be the next step in the evolution of a system which shall offer opportunity for individual initiative and expression, and give to teachers a larger participation in educational procedure."

Such is the conclusion of Superintendent Dyer.

The belief that the best teacher was one who followed orders, and left all questions of procedure, courses of study, and methods to the all-wise supervisors and school officials is gradually being forsaken. America has long expressed her disgust with that type of teacher, whose mind was a blank upon every subject, except the little portion of accumulated information that he dispensed in his classroom. America failed to realize, however, that our educational system was aimed to produce exactly that type of

teacher. Happily a change is taking place. There is coming a greater and greater recognition that the system which invites the participation of teachers in all school matters and encourages initiative, will produce teachers who are progressive and alive. It is such teachers "who form the basis of our educational progress."

### LABOR AND THE SCHOOL

This interpretation of the labor movement reveals how it is related in nature to the schools of our country. The undeveloped children of our nation are the materials with which our schools deal. If the school succeeds in its work, the teachers direct and assist in the unfolding of the mental, physical and spiritual powers of the children entrusted to their care. Their whole work is to enable the children to find themselves, to discover their abilities, to develop and use them, to understand the world in which they live, to know the people among whom they live, to use the opportunities and the forces in their environment for the common good, and to be prepared to appreciate the meaning of life and work, and to live a life in which the doing of all duties and the performance of all work shall be with understanding, inspiration and purpose.

The school is concerned with early life and development. If it succeeds, it lays a foundation for the labor movement which is the most potential force operating in the lives of men and women for justice, common uplift and betterment. The labor movement, therefore, has an immediate interest in the ideals, methods and results of our nation's schools. We welcome all movements for closer relations between the teachers and the labor movement. We are fully appreciative of the power entrusted to teachers. To you has been entrusted the opportunity to shape and mold the minds, the ideals, the characters of the future citizens of our country. It is a responsibility that must appeal to the best and noblest in your nature and call forth the highest effort.

—SAMUEL GOMPERS, before the N. E. A., July 7, 1916.

## What They Say

### PRESIDENT WILLCOX'S PENSION COMMITTEE

A month ago President Wilcox announced that he would instruct the principals of the schools to hold elections for the purpose of electing delegates to the Pension Committee, so that the teachers will be fully and properly represented. The President of the Board is sincere and means well, but how will it work out?

A principal in a Brooklyn school has already called a meeting of her teachers for that purpose and had delegates elected in the following democratic and just way.

She called the meeting to order and spoke as follows: "Of course you will elect Miss A and possibly Miss B and C, if so many are needed, or as alternates! And of course Miss A and Miss B and Miss C were elected. To prevent such polite intimidation the Union believes that such meetings should be called to order by a chairman selected by the teachers from among their number, and that the voting should be by ballot. The votes should be counted by tellers elected by the teachers. Further to insure the teachers in their rights, the work of this committee must be approved by a majority of the teachers at referendum held for that purpose. Don't you agree with us?"

E F K

New York

### Editors, THE AMERICAN TEACHER:

I am enclosing remittance for my copy of the "American Teacher," for which I have a high esteem. Please put balance, after paying for my subscription, into the general treasury, as you doubtless need some encouragement in keeping up so thankless an enterprise as trying to inject some efficient self respect and independence into teachers.

JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON.

Columbia University



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## VICIOUS AND PARTISAN NEUTRALITY

THE GREAT ELECTION is over. Like the famous Battle of Blenheim, it was a Glorious Victory. Like previous elections it was decided at the conclusion of a campaign in which the leaders righteously posed as representatives of all interests, and rightfully accused their opponents of catering to the interests of special groups. Here and there, however, special groups permitted themselves to be persuaded that all parties are equally concerned with all the interests of all the people, and sought to select from among all the candidates the "good" men to be voted for by other "non-partisans."

This type of non-partisan neutrality is particularly vicious when it is exercised by teachers, for it is an evasion of responsibility and establishes a cleavage of interests that is both confusing and demoralizing. A particularly obnoxious specimen of this type of political thinking appeared in New York a few days before election. A group issuing circulars under the name of "The Teachers' Citizen League" called upon the voting teachers to give their support to a selected group of candidates for re-election to the State Assembly, on the ground that "they had been faithful to the interests of the people and just and friendly to the teachers of the city."

There is no specification offered in evidence of the faithfulness of the men selected "to the interests of the people," and it is intimated that they are possessed of "honesty and efficiency." But there is the statement that their justice and friendliness "to the teachers" consisted in their opposition to a certain pension bill; for which they are alleged to have "especially earned the gratitude" of the teachers. And lest the reader be inclined to pass the appeal indifferently, there is added this final bit of clap-trap: "We want them back in the legislature, to be on the side of right and justice in all future pension legislation."

The favored list of candidates contains the names of Republicans, Democrats, and the one Socialist Assemblyman, for

the League "is a non-partizan body, and does not discriminate against a man because of his party affiliations, or because he adheres to honorable principles of party belief." There is no pretense of analyzing the services of the candidates in their previous incumbency—it is sufficient that they opposed a bill which was opposed by the League members. It happens that the writer and most of the members and officers of the Teachers Union of New York were also opposed to that bill—but we consider it vicious politics to apply in this manner the principle of "rewarding friends and punishing enemies."

The teachers, of all people, should know that political parties must have some meaning other than being convenient instruments for ambitious office seekers. The affectation of "non-partizanship" is in this case anything but a virtue. It is a deliberate disregard of the fundamental issues of economic and social conflict for the purpose of advancing the special interests of a faction. It appears to be "liberal" and "tolerant"—it is really selfish and cruelly indifferent to the larger concerns of the community. We have no right to be "non-partizan" and we have no right to trade political support for legislative favoritism. This is but one step removed from outright purchase of legislation.

The members of the legislature may not be as scrupulous as we should wish; they may not be as intelligent and as informed and as disinterested as we should wish. But we must not corrupt them by praising their adherence to "honest principles of party belief" as tho that were a strictly private matter of no practical consequence to the community, the while we compensate them for supporting our interest, on the pretext that what is good for the teachers is identical with "right and justice."

Let us hope that teachers will have sufficient vision to demand of legislatures only what is right and just. But let us not trample under foot what is basic in our political beliefs, and what is truly significant in our system of party politics.

### THE COST OF KEEPING ALIVE

WITH THE single exception of a grain of gold (or a ton) the cost of everything has gone up and up. The war has no doubt accelerated the process, but the soaring has been under way for many years. Every few years groups of workers here and there are seized by a spasm of desperation and make clamor for more pay. And sometimes they get it. Every now and then an employer or a legislative body is seized by a spasm of compassion or conscience and advances the pay of workers without waiting for a clamor.

It is well recognized by economists that rates of wages tend to approach the cost of living, as the latter advances; but that salaries lag behind more sluggishly. The reason for this disparity lies in the fact that salaried workers are too dignified to acknowledge the pinch of underpayment, and in the further fact that they are, on the whole, too individualistic and self-seeking to organize effectively for advancing their common interests.

Salaries of teachers and of other public servants, fixed by legislatures, are especially difficult to adjust in response to changing economic conditions, with the result that the true wage begins to decline almost immediately after it is determined upon. And it will not do to ask for frequent revisions. You need but appear to plead for more pay twice within the memory of a generation to acquire the reputation of "always asking for more money."

To avoid the annoyance to the public as well as to the servants, and at the same time to maintain the pay of the workers at the level ostensibly contemplated by the legislature (presumably representing the wishes of the public), we propose that in all legislation containing salary schedules for teachers and other public employes, the rates be stated not in dollars and cents, as is now customary, but in terms of multiples of some standard "index figure."

The salary schedules of teachers in New York were fixed over four years ago. Since then the W K C of L has has expanded some fifty per cent. or

more. The rise has been gradual; but it has at last reached a level that imposes serious hardship upon thousands of teachers. To be sure, other classes of workers are also affected, and just as seriously. But it will be necessary before very long to present arguments for revision of schedules. This will be the time to arrange scientific schedules that will virtually determine a level of living for public servants, rather than a gambling chance on coming out even. Figures are arbitrary and of shifting significance; we want not dollars and cents but an assurance of maintenance that will permit us to do our work most effectively.

### THE FLUOROSCOPE\*

ON NUMEROUS occasions THE AMERICAN TEACHER has called attention to the fact that educational systems, especially the educational system of the City of New York, have given slight attention to the matter of expressing in definite terms the standards of qualification for the highest positions on the technical staff. The sad result of this indifference to the public welfare is the continuation in office of many principals and superintendents who are far from being fit representatives of an important public service. From time to time we shall stand up some sample characters before the fluoroscope to show what an educational system acting without intelligence and social understanding can really do to us. Our readers will fully understand that years of submission to what outsiders would instantly call intolerable conditions tends to make it difficult for teachers to tell the wholesome truth about their superior officers. That fact operates to protect many officials who should be kicked out of the service summarily. If teachers do not show signs of want-

\*The Fluoroscope, as many of our readers do not know, is an instrument that makes visible the shadowings of the X-rays, and is thus a convenient means for discovering what goes on inside an organic body, or for locating hardware swallowed by a baby.

Ed.

ing to rid themselves of so ominous a burden, they will soon be fighting an uphill fight to hold the respect of the public and of the children themselves.

We are asked frequently how such and such a person could be appointed to the position of principal or of superintendent. The answer is either that the appointee is the personal friend of a person already in power, or one known to be ready to carry out the will of that person in power or of the group he represents. There is seldom a thought of a duty to the public, and the appointing power cares nothing for your "mushy" talk about ideals.

The schools of New York City suffer more from the evils arising out of wasteful, unfair, incompetent and inhuman supervision than from all other causes. We propose to do something to discredit and punish wrong doing in our branch of the public service.

### I

TO HIS associates on the teaching staff years ago he was a conceited and ill-mannered ass; so is he yet. But it is supposed that the City Superintendent knew he could be relied on to do the personal bidding, and the man who could not command the respect of his fellows while a teacher was appointed to the principalship of a high school. There his subordinates find it advisable to conceal their contempt. You can't change him," they say, "so what is the use of making a fuss about it?"

The nearer by a tyrant is the more he can oppress. A principal has only to stride down the corridor and he is on you, while the City Superintendent is miles away, and you may never see him at all. In a system that invites tyranny nothing is more natural than that the principal should slam his fist on the table at teachers' meeting and yell, "That's an order!" "We'll not discuss that; that's my order!" Thus our principal gives us a sample of his temperament and of his executive ability. We submit to the insult, for "What's the use of kicking; we can't change him?"

It is always easy to be consistent if you are a tyrant. It makes no difference to a tyrant whether teachers work their hardest thru fear of being insulted or from fear of being marked down in the term's rating. All you need to care for is "results." All you need is to keep your eye on what you want. How you get it, and what it means, need not cause you any loss of sleep. To raise the roof when a teacher causes more than twenty per cent. of her pupils to fail, is not inconsistent with expressing satisfaction when ninety per cent. pass, even tho you have reason to think more than ten per cent. did not deserve to pass. You want results, and you are consistent in that. Our principal is as consistent as they make them. There is no place for fine, hair-splitting distinctions with ethical bearings in the school business, for it is *real* business. But a clever tyrant is too clever to flaunt the red rag of dirty business before the eyes of the general public. It is dangerous.

Our principal is so good an administrator that he can turn over to willing hands the many tasks that would otherwise swamp him. This system of administration besides being followed by our principal is followed by administrators who use the time thus given them for general constructive thinking and planning. But instead of thinking and planning, outside of spasmodic imitations, our superior spends part of his time rushing into the lime-light of the business activity of the school and out again, storming, yelling and stamping hardest at the beginning or at the end of the term when there is most doing. This output of energy on the part of the principal increases the confusion, causes the weary teachers to become more weary, makes the children laugh and gives the village barber more to gossip about.

Between times our principal storms into the general office where a thoughtless boy who "has broken his pledged word" has sat in silent uselessness for an hour or more waiting his turn to be insulted by the superior officer of us all. We hear the loud, harsh voice, we see

the straining neck muscles, and the angry face, black with surcharged blood vessels, and we feel the nervous jar set up in our bodies, and still we say, "Oh what's the use of kicking against it all?" "You can't change him." And there we sit and wait stupidly for the storm to pass.

And it does pass, for a pretty girl pupil goes by the window with her physical training class that is marching in the yard. Off the principal rushes to the window, and looking out exclaims to everybody in the room, "My, but that girl has a wonderful complexion! What remarkable hair! And what beautiful eyes and statuesque shoulders. Say, Charley, (a senior teacher) did you ever notice her?" Charley never had, but everyone by this time had not only noticed, but had been overwhelmed, by the principal. And still, everybody said, "What's the use of kicking? You can't change an old dog like him. Forget about it." But let us try to change him anyway—change him for an ideal.

### PROFESSIONALISM

In reality there is no more reprehensible form of graft than that of trying to force upon the schools teachers who have neither the personal nor educational qualifications that are always insisted upon by the capable and honest superintendent. To deprive the children in the schools of any city the privilege of being under the influence of teachers of the right kind should be made a crime; and yet so long as boards of education refuse to allow superintendents of schools to have full authority to select teachers, our schools will fail to render the service which every well conducted system of schools brings to the community by which it is supported. The unfortunate aspect of the situation is that as a general thing the less fitted by training and ability the members of a board of education are to determine the qualifications of the teaching-force in a school system, the more unwilling they are to give to the superintendent the full measure of authority which should go with the position. There is still much to be done in the direction of educating the public to see that the efficiency of a school system can never be higher than the quality of its teachers.

American Education.

October, 1916.

## GARY NOTES

ALPHA H TAYLOR, *Representative*  
The Teachers' Association of Gary,  
Indiana has elected the following officers  
for the ensuing year:

President—Z A Chandler  
First Vice President—Elizabeth Ames  
Second Vice President—Anita Bailey  
Recording Secretary—E B Carlile  
Financial Secretary—Florence Gingle  
Treasurer—G A Monsch  
Representative to School Board—F A  
Morris

Trustees—John A White  
R B Shoemaker  
Miss Clara Lutz

The Association gave a banquet and  
reception on the evening of October 3,  
in honor of Superintendent and Mrs  
William A Wirt.

Twelve representatives of the Chicago  
Federation and two from the Illinois  
Federation of Labor recently inspected  
our schools and interviewed Superintendent  
Wirt.

## THE VALUE OF MRS FURSMAN DISCHARGED

Dozens of listeners hearing Mrs Fursman at the joint monthly dinner were thrilled with a sense of what she is now worth to teachers, now that she is free from the class room to go from New York to Denver telling her story. The results of the awakening of teachers and parents everywhere simply cannot be measured. Mrs Fursman makes her hearers feel the tyranny in the present situation and the danger of it, without bombast or ranting. The iron that has entered her soul has pointed her intellect and uplifted her emotions until she carries enlightenment and conviction with every sentence. Truly in this chaotic world good comes out of evil—*October Bulletin Chicago Federation of Men Teachers and of The Federation of Women High School Teachers.*

## TEACHERS' UNION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

A. LEFKOWITZ, *Representative*

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS intended for publication in this section must be submitted to the Press Committee by chairmen or members, and must fall under one of the classifications mentioned below.

### DO WE NEED A UNION?

Miss Mary T Eaton, chairman of the Teachers' Interests Committee, which had investigated the grievances of Miss X, Miss Y and Miss Z, reported as follows:

(1) Miss X, a teacher in a Manhattan school, had fought against the Federation Pension Bill, contrary to the wishes of her principal, had thereby incurred her enmity and was immediately annoyed by unnecessary supervision. Because of the continual nagging to which Miss X was subjected, she became ill and died. At the request of her sister, the committee began its investigation. For some unknown reason the family asked the Teachers' Interests Committee to take no further action in the case. As the Union can do nothing without the testimony of the family the Executive Board reluctantly voted to drop the matter.

(2) Miss Y, a teacher of a Bronx school, received her fourth year salary approval last April but at the end of the term the Board of Superintendents refused her a permanent license. The Board based its action upon the request of the City Superintendent of Schools who made this recommendation at the request of Miss Y's principal. Miss Eaton recommended that the case be placed in the hands of our counsellor, Mr John E O'Brien. Mr O'Brien stated that we have a good case and if the precedents favored the Union he would fight the case to a finish in the courts.

(3) Miss Z, a teacher in a Queens school, opposed the Federation Pension Bill which her principal supported. Because of her legitimate opposition to



the bill which her superior favored, the principal berated her as a "disturbing factor" and accused her of insubordination for daring to fight for her rights. After a great deal of pressure, Miss Z signed her transfer. Thereupon the principal who had hitherto always rated Miss Z as satisfactory, gave her a "C" in discipline so that she lost her increase and was refused her permanent license. The superintendent and the principal now demanded that Miss Z change the reasons that she had given as the grounds for desiring a transfer but she refused as her reasons were as stated and she did not purpose to lie for the sake of saving the face of her superiors. Thereupon the superintendent, in order to discipline Miss Z, refused to sanction her transfer so that Miss Z will again be subject to the mercies of her just principal and superintendent.

Teachers, these cases are typical. Because of the tremendous power placed in the hands of the principal thru our archaic and unjust marking system, because of the inability of the teacher to get a public trial in case of injustice or oppression, the teacher who dares assert his rights, who dares express his honest thoughts, finds his permanent license refused, his increase denied, or else is hounded until he succumbs and becomes a fawning, spineless individual or else an undesirable teacher with no opportunity for advancement no matter how able or brilliant.

Teachers, how often have you felt your impotence in the face of the autocratic and unjust machine which dominates the educational system? How often have your splendid sentiments been met with scorn, your initiative crushed, and your ideas ridiculed at birth? How often were you disgusted with yourself and with your position when you realized that you were in a system that discounts independence and initiative and puts a premium on subserviency?

Teachers, the hour for deliverance is at hand! The Powers That Be are beginning to see the writing on the wall! The Union has placed itself on record

that it will use its collective strength to fight the battles of the downtrodden and oppressed teacher. Freedom of speech, freedom of thought and freedom of action, must be established in our school system if we are to be worthy to fit our embryonic citizens to fight the battles for social and economic justice—the cornerstone of a lasting democracy. The schools must be democratized and that is the task of the Teachers' Union! That is your task and a noble one it is.

Buckle on your armor and go out and hustle.

### I MEAN YOU

Have you spoken about the Union to any teachers that you know? Did you persuade any one to join the Union during the month of October? How many prospective members have you in mind? Do you feel an individual responsibility for the growth of the Union? Are you living in Bookland or in Workland? Do you realize that 2 per cent. of the people in this country own 60 per cent. of the wealth? That 33 per cent. own 35 per cent. of the wealth and 65 per cent. of the people own but 5 per cent. of the wealth? If you don't you live in bookland and are unable to act as an intellectual guide to our future citizens? Have you studied the report of the Committee on Industrial Relations? If you have, what do you propose to do about it? Bookland or Workland? Which?

Mr Glassberg, chairman, reports that the Investigation Committee will soon be ready to show how thousands can be saved by the city government so that necessary school activities need not be curtailed for lack of funds.

The Pension Principles will soon be embodied in a bill and again submitted for approval to the teachers. The committee has a big fight on its hands but feels equal to the task. "The harder the fight, the more pleasant the contest," says the true unionist.

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Statement of the ownership, amangement, circulation, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of THE AMERICAN TEACHER, published monthly (except July and August), at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1916: State of New York, County of Kings, ss.:

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Jeanette G. Glassberg, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Business Manager of the AMERICAN TEACHER and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher—THE AMERICAN TEACHER CO., INC., 70 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

Editor—HENRY R. LINVILLE, 60 Terrace Ave., Jamaica, N. Y.

Managing Editor—BENJ. C. GRUENBERG, 230 W. 107th St., New York, N. Y.

Business Managers—JEANETTE G. GLASSBERG, 417 15th Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

2. That the owners are:—THE AMERICAN TEACHER CO., INC., 70 Fifth Ave., New York; HENRY R. LINVILLE, 60 Terrace Ave., Jamaica, N. Y.; GABRIEL R. MASON, 1107 Forest Ave., New York; BENJ. C. GRUENBERG, 230 W. 107th St., New York; MARK HOFFMAN, 1143 Vyse Ave., New York; J. EDWARD MAYMAN, 914 E. Parkway, Brooklyn, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgages, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are—None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving

the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds or other securities than as so stated by him.

JEANETTE G. GLASSBERG,  
Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29th day of September, 1916.

(Seal) BENJAMIN T. SNYDER

No. 8027 (My commission expires March, 1918.)

# NOTICE

BEGINNING with the new year, the subscription price of THE AMERICAN TEACHER will be increased to one dollar. We advise you to subscribe now and take advantage of the old rate.

**THE AMERICAN TEACHER**

(Incorporated)

70 Fifth Avenue, New York

## Questionnaire

Do you seek greater recognition for meritorious service? How are you striving to attain it?

Do you feel legitimately aggrieved—and ineffectual for lack of adequate Power? What are you doing to strengthen yourself?

Do you wish to work under a fair retirement law? What are you doing toward getting one?

As a humble, unassociated individual, you can inspire neither respect nor solicitude. You can inspire only indifference or contempt.

As an aggressive, associated fellow, linked to powerful social forces, devoted to the common welfare, you can command respect and consideration. You can BE a Power!

Do you feel capable of vastly greater achievement than a routinized system encourages you to contribute?

Do you feel "sick and tired" of your job because it is not suitably regarded in the world at large?

Do you feel humiliated by petty penalties and by trivial tyrannies imposed from above?

Do you feel unrepresented in the management of your most serious activities and relations?

If you do feel all these stirring dissatisfactions, and are not wanting in courage. Join the TEACHERS UNION. The Union will make of you an effective Personality. Don't vacillate. Join the Union, and thru it THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS.

